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Mike Kelley and Surrealism: Monkeys, Frogs, Dogs and Mauss

Doug Haynes

This paper reads the 1980s and 1990s soft toy and sock-monkey installations of multimedia artist Mike Kelley in relation to surrealism. Using Hal Foster's comments on abject art - of which Kelley is often considered an exponent - I consider the extent to which Kelley's work desublimates and makes available as 'affect' some of the structures of feeling, and structuring feelings, of the capitalist life-world. I compare Kelley's work to its surrealist antecedents and judge the political efficacy of that avant-garde against his postmodern practice. While this essay uses writers like Freud and Marx, alongside Breton, Bataille and Kelley himself, it is Marcel Mauss's well-known theory of the gift that takes centre stage in reckoning the social and political significance of Kelley and his use of surrealist discourse.

The multimedia artist Mike Kelley first started playing with ways to incorporate sock monkeys, soft toys, and other found, hand-stitched 'folk' art into his practice in 1982, when he used the projected slide of a green soft-toy frog as a prominent part of his performance piece *Confusion: A Play in Seven Sets, Each Set More Spectacular and Elaborate than the Last* in Los Angeles. There, as Colin Gardner notes, the frog emblematised the looping logic and wandering narrative of Kelley's show: '[h]is metaphor for this confusion was the circular mouth of the frog, considered as an insatiable eater who consumes everything and makes it look like itself, a shapeless blob of memory, chaos and boredom.'¹ Like Georges Bataille's spider, or gob of spit, the frog was an inchoate entity, an incontinent consumer and destroyer of system.²

In this respect, perhaps the frog also signals one of the enduring qualities of Kelley's work: its power to upset hegemonic patterns of order. Cary Levine says of Kelley that '[h]is medium of choice was, above all, social meaning itself Cornered by his art, viewers must reevaluate some of their most deep-seated assumptions and beliefs.'³ Although the range of cultural and artistic reference is extraordinarily wide throughout his oeuvre, in this essay I want to explore how Kelley developed ideas from European surrealism, both as a practice of psychoanalytically-inspired disjunction, and also as an anarchistic, poetic and subversive politics. As in the case of the frog here, this tendency is, I think, particularly pronounced in Kelley's deployment of the soft toy as a latter-day surrealist *poupée*.

Goopy Forms

To position Kelley in relation to surrealism, it is worth considering his exposure to the movement, which first occurred, albeit indirectly, during his undergraduate years studying art at the University of Michigan in the mid-1970s. His friend and collaborator at postgraduate school at CalArts, the artist Tony Oursler, recalls the influence on Kelley of self-consciously surrealist-inspired Chicago Imagists - 'the Hairy Who' - like Jim Nutt, as well as the prints and sculptures of figures like H. C. Westermann. Bucking the slickness of 1960s New York pop, these Midwestern artists included fantasy elements, biker-magazine cartoonishness, caricature and the grotesque in works often reminiscent of the 'soft' paintings of Dalí or Tanguy. By the mid-70s, Oursler tells us,



Mike was emerging from the spell of the Detroit scene: the Hairy Who, Blue Cheer, Iggy Pop, R. Crumb. I watched Mike destroy piles of old drawings in his studio at CalArts, and it was part of his process of reformation and self-mythologizing. ... I can't help but think that watching him sift through the Jim Nutt-like images from his Ann Arbor days was an early step in this process. Many of the drawings that were saved from the trash that day were painted over in the late 80s and re-presented. Mike was obsessed with keeping certain histories alive while rewriting and creating others.⁴

Oursler's comments illuminate his friend's 'image-management'; they also direct us towards the latter's show *Missing Time: Works on Paper (1974-1976)* of 1994, in which the amended Ann Arbor works reappeared, repainted to emphasise the points he makes in the catalogue for the exhibition. Here, Kelley confesses his fondness for the 'goopy, slightly disgusting surfaces of abstract expressionism' and explains how, like Nutt, he combined this kind of high art technique with the 'low imagery' of advertising and underground comics, alluding to William Burroughs as a model for such juxtaposition.⁵ The key point for him is that such work should not be primarily gestural, as Robert Rauschenberg and pop-art had been; Kelley's attention to the 'loaded image' wishes to retain something *semantically* as well as aesthetically complex (if we can make that distinction) in the combination of images and marks he makes and collects. Indeed, in his important 1989 essay 'Foul Perfection: Thoughts on Caricature,' Kelley provides a sophisticated analysis of caricature and the 'grotesque' mixing of forms (for critics like Levine and Robert Storr, the dominant trope in his work), suggesting ways in which such genres undermine the drive in especially the modernist artwork towards idealised, monological presentation.⁶

Likewise, in a 1998 interview with artist Jim Shaw, his old friend and fellow member of Detroit noise-band Destroy All Monsters, Kelley suggests a cultural shift away from post-war conformity as a stimulus for the new art. 'The reaction against this restrictive period resulted in an explosion of senseless imagery in the 1960s,' he tells us, 'obviously influenced by Surrealist art, but without the psychological underpinnings of Surrealism.' In this 'senseless imagery' - by which Kelley mainly means psychedelia - the supposedly 'unified psychology' of surrealism 'was left behind. The fractured voice of William Burroughs was the new naturalism.'⁷ And in a later interview, that same fractured voice is tellingly invested with exegetical properties - a kind of code-breaking that reveals

submeanings that shine through the ordering structure of syntax. Burroughs calls the invisible ordering structure 'the gray veil.' And once you start to see through the gray veil of culture, then you can recognize it as a kind of brainwashing and control mechanism.⁸

Rather than retain the 'unified' thought of Freud as a mastering discourse of conscious/unconscious with which to rend the veil, then, Kelley reaches for the more immanent mode of critique he finds in Burroughs's cut-up writing, turning cultural discourse against itself, exposing what the artist repeatedly refers to as 'reality as a social construction.'⁹ Indeed, this is the kind of sceptical (even 'kynical') position suggested by Levine's comment above: Kelley the disillusioned artist and citizen of the post-Watergate, post-Vietnam era, suspicious of all discourses as discourses of power, as Burroughs had been.¹⁰ But Burroughs, it should be remembered, was introduced to cut-up by his English friend Brion Gysin, who had exhibited with the surrealists in the mid-1930s.¹¹ Burroughs's writing after *Naked*



Lunch (1959) is thus an important conduit between the historical avant-garde and the post-war American scene.¹²

Robert Storr usefully broadens this out in a discussion of Robert Gober:

Surrealism as a period style is long dead [but] the undead spirit of Surrealism has come back to haunt modernism ... When using the label now, 'surrealist' does not mean that the work in question follows a style or adheres to a manifesto-driven programme, but merely that it has found uses - in the best case - new uses for methods of estrangement pioneered in another time.¹³

As we shall see, such estrangements may include the use of disjunction, fantasy, the unconscious, the mannequin, the toy, or the excavation of childhood; all of which appear in Kelley's work. On the issue of childhood, Jack Spector has argued that the crucible of French surrealism can be found in the strict Third Republic education and late-Victorian childhood the members of the surrealist group received, providing them with both a rationalist agenda against which to kick, and a Rousseauian background with which to dream of perfectibility.¹⁴ Artists like Mike Kelley, Jim Shaw and Robert Gober draw, of course, from a very different reservoir. As Storr again suggests,

When Surrealism leaked out of the salon existence it had maintained in America, it had to compete with the indigenous forms of weirdness that popular culture fed and fed off. Tabloids, TV, monster magazines, and cartoons were where most post-1950s artists went to school before they went to art school ...¹⁵

The critic refers to the boom in post-1950s American commercial media production and its underground counterparts, often surprisingly close in tone, like *Sex to Sexty*, *Zap Comix*, or *MAD* magazine, clearly referenced in Kelley's artworks. This is the cultural diet - and a decidedly lapsarian one - that substitutes for those 'piazzas with the long shadows, or whatever,' that Jim Shaw imagines gestating in the early memories of the European surrealists.¹⁶ An American surrealism, that is, cannot *look like* European surrealism, whatever the strength of its connection to its antecedents; for Kelley's generation, it will inevitably be far 'goopier' in form and, indeed, content.

In part, this is because surrealism as a period style, as Shaw tells Kelley, has degenerated 'from a revolutionary force into an advertising gimmick.'¹⁷ Mostly, though, it is because the warp and weft of modern American life yields very different objects from those of interwar France. Shaw's collection of thrift store paintings, which resembles in spirit Kelley's own collection of thrift store handmade toys, functions, for example, as a knowingly ersatz version of the surrealist *trouvaille*: 'Collecting the thrift store paintings was sort of like sifting through *Life* magazines from 1942. I was sifting through the American subconscious by going to thrift stores - not just looking at paintings [largely 'fucked-up portraits,' he says], but everything ...'¹⁸ More mundane than the St-Ouen flea market so beloved of André Breton, perhaps Shaw's sense of the thrift store as the American repressed - objects denied or denuded of monetary value and cultural status - still works rather as Walter Benjamin imagined the early surrealist interest in the 'outmoded.' For Benjamin, 'fashionable restaurants when the vogue has begun to ebb from them,' or 'the first iron constructions,' can startle their viewer into the revolutionary perception that temporal experience is inextricably bound to political economy.¹⁹ So too amateur paintings, or lovingly stitched unwanted toys, that end up adrift in the thrift



store, show us an underside to, or critically refracted perspective on, 'normal' social relationships and everyday economies. And it is to Kelley's toy works that I now turn.

Toy Story 1

Several years after *Confusion*, and taking a rather different tack, Kelley's 1987 work, *More Love Hours Than Can Ever Be Repaid*, placed the soft toy motif centre-stage as all-over painting, satirising the masculine, Greenbergian sublimity of abstract expressionism. The wildly colourful *Love Hours* featured dozens of second-hand, hand-made dolls of multiple types vertically displayed edge-to-edge across wall-mounted afghans, stitched to a canvas. The assemblage is surmounted by two apparent quotation marks made from folksy corn sheaves; installed to the front and left of the piece is a sculpture - a pedestal of phallic wax candles entitled *The Wages of Sin* (1987). The 'feminised' handiwork of the stitched dolls contrasts as much with the contemporary 'hard' commodity art of figures like Jeff Koons and Haim Steinbach as it does with the butch ghosts of action painting, a performance Kelley saw as 'gender bending'.²⁰ Action painters were themselves much indebted, of course, to surrealist ideas of the automatic and aleatory.²¹ For his part, Kelley's longstanding editor and interlocutor John C. Welchman notes that the soft toy pieces 'engage in a specific dialogue with the 'classical,' enshelved commodity objects of Haim Steinbach, one of the defining gestures in the New York appropriationism that dominated the 1980s art world.'²² But appropriation art too, we should note, has its beginnings in the dada readymade and the surrealist *trouvaille*; even in its most calculating manifestation it gains its *frisson* from the queer ontology of objects that are 'out of place' in a gallery.²³ Kelley's objects seem thus to perform a kind of educative critical work on the genres he references, bringing surrealism to light as a common predecessor.

Over the next four years, numerous explorations of the possibilities of the toy works were executed: sculptural forms like the towering toy snake *Plush Kundalini and Chakra Set* (1987); the 1990 *Arena* series, which sited soft toys on rugs horizontally, referencing the low-rise work of Carl André and others, and the 1991 *Dialogues* series, which added boom-boxes to the mix, were produced. 'Occupying little territories on the ground,' Welchman again writes, 'these works wormed out their niche in that "down and dirty" lineage of floored production, stretching back to Jackson Pollock, and recently associated with "base materialism" and the *informe*.'²⁴ The artist also made his *Empathy Displacement* paintings in 1990 based on the toys, and his 'hanging sculptures' in 1991: objects consisting of toys balled into large plush masses, heads buried inwards, away from their viewer, and suspended by pulleys amidst angular, shiny plexiglass sculptures.

Tiring, however, of audience responses, which had started to associate the toy works too readily with notions of child abuse, either metaphorically or as autobiographical confession, Kelley closed this branch of his production with *Craft Morphology Flow Chart* (1991), a large installation of drawings, photographs and toys on tables, which displayed, measured and categorised sock-monkey types using methods reminiscent of the scientific racism of the Victorian era.²⁵



Toy Story 2

Discussing his 1990 *Arena #10* installation, which featured a line of handmade dog dolls - 'autograph hounds' designed to be written upon - strung out across an afghan, Kelley noted an uncomfortable double-consciousness in his work:

I toyed with the viewer's inclination to project into the figures, to construct an inner narrative around them, which I would argue makes viewers less aware of their own physical presence. To counter this tendency, and thus make the viewer more self-conscious, I used extremely worn and soiled craft materials ... Fear of soiling themselves countered the urge to idealize.²⁶

Of course, ordinarily, nobody wants to soil themselves. Any pleasurable engagement in the narrativisation or idealisation of these otherwise archetypically cute figures is undercut by the signs and smells of the bodies of others, especially anonymous others. Dirt has the power to put one on guard, both in the form of fussy self-attention and as a kind of police action. Mary Douglas famously pointed out that dirt 'offends against order. Eliminating it is not a negative movement, but a positive effort to organise the environment.'²⁷ Dirt forces us to differentiate between good and bad, sacred and profane; hence, we do not empathise with these smelly toy figures.

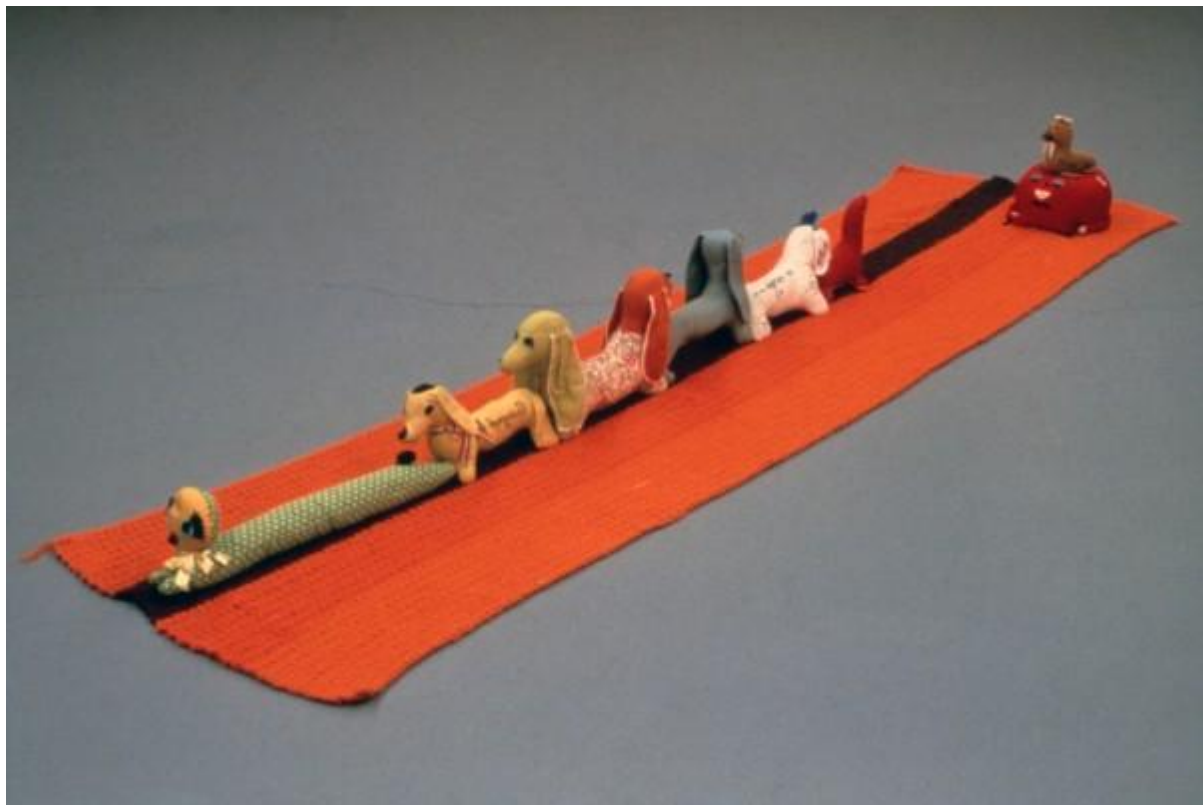


Fig. 1: Mike Kelley, *Arena #10 (Dogs)*, 1990, Stuffed animals on afghan, 11.5 x 123 x 32 inches. Photo: Douglas M. Parker

But there is another side to the soiled dogs of *Arena #10* and the other dolls in Kelley's series, which draws us in *because* they are dirty. As the artist himself and a number of his critics have suggested, these toy works closely resemble what child psychologist D. M. Winnicott called



'transitional objects': the means by which infants negotiate the world beyond themselves, exploring the space once occupied by the mother.²⁸ Such objects, typically soft toys, Winnicott tells us, are always allowed to remain soiled, lest a break be caused in the continuity of the infant's experience and development.²⁹ David Hopkins reads this reference to suggest that:

Kelley's work is thus parodic, although ambivalently so, of late-twentieth-century American obsessions with child abuse and 'correct' psychological development. His blankets and knitted toys are clearly as much bound up with critiquing contemporary discourses of childhood as they are with childish fantasy itself. In his best work it is hard to separate out Kelley's investment in his subject matter from his critique of its societal institutionalisation.³⁰

Like Levine, Hopkins regards Kelley as primarily a critic of ideological hygiene. His comments do not, however, seem fully to acknowledge the capacity of these Winnicottian objects to generate a kind of intimate repulsiveness, akin to what Aurel Kolnai once called an 'eroticism of disgust,' with all the ambivalence and atavism that might imply.³¹

To take *Arena #10* as an example, we might note firstly that the scene is one of sex: a line of autographed hounds, marked with such disturbing legends as, 'Have fun at your new school. Love. Dawn,' are doing it doggy-style, a snake-like protuberance or serpentine fuckee at one end, a toy seal at the other. A friendly walrus sits atop a tomato to watch. In his exhibition essay on *Arenas*, Cary Levine spots the voyeurism of *#10* - which surely replays and confuses the roles of spectator and object, adult and child - and cites Freud's remark that, rather than imagine the adult to become a pervert, 'it would be more correct to say that he had *remained* one.'³²

Levine's implication is that the toys have been soiled by the pre-adult sexual impulses of their child-owners. It might be better to suggest that in this and other assemblages in the *Arenas*, Kelley folds together representations of both adult and child: the 'transitional object' in this way takes on a metaphorical function, recalling his attention to the grotesque. The originary polymorphousness of the child - signalled here by the two-headed dog that forms the centrepiece to *#10* - becomes a lost utopia that can only be reimagined in a lapsarian vernacular of loss and horror. Smell functions as the discipline of repulsion, signalling the imperative for distance; yet it also erotically and insidiously inveigles the spectator into a more unseelving identification. As Adorno and Horkheimer put it,

The multifarious nuances of the sense of smell embody the archetypal longing for the lower forms of existence, for direct unification with circumambient nature, with the earth and mud. Of all the senses, that of smell - which is attracted without objectifying - bears clearest witness to the urge to lose oneself in and become the 'other.'³³

Respiring in this heady medium, the little scenes of kidult activity the *Arenas* display involve not only gangbangs but 'low' popular cultural imagery, like alien autopsies; others show conferences, loneliness, quotidian situations. Such scenes are tragicomic: childhood appears not as Rousseauian idyll but as perverse, alien. In the *Arenas*, only a partially resistant trace, maybe a simulation, of what 'socially constructed reality' represses, can appear.



Enjoy Your Symptom

Kelley allows us to smile when we experience such vignettes, and occupy such divided perspectives. One is reminded of that Baudelairean irony which finds its highest form in laughing at itself. But perhaps this is what Hal Foster means when he identifies the aimlessness of the abject art moment as it superseded 1980s postmodernism. Foster focuses his comments on artists like Andres Serrano, the later Cindy Sherman, and on Kelley himself. No longer linked to a notion of art as an agent of history or even to a sense of the activity and affirmation of postmodern 'play,' the art of abjection, for Foster, instead submits itself to techniques of disaggregation and de-selving. 'If there is a subject of history for the culture of abjection at all, it is not the Worker, the Woman, or the Person of Color, but the Corpse,' Foster writes, scathingly. 'This is a politics of difference pushed beyond indifference, a politics of alterity pushed to nihility. "Everything goes dead," says the Kelley teddy. "Like us," responds the bunny.'³⁴

Detecting also a note of curious self-satisfaction in this wound-culture, Foster wonders if the goal of the abject artist is nothing more than perverse self-aggrandisement. The success of abject practice, like that of the self-harmer, is achieved simply through the pained registration of the 'object-gaze of the real': an accession to whatever unspeakable other threatens or mortifies the subject, against which dark horizon all signification gratefully fails.³⁵ For Foster, figures like Kelley become the privileged bearers of a pervasive *lingua trauma* which functions as a quietist, affirmative culture: keep still and carry on.³⁶ Enjoy your symptom!³⁷

In this sense, and importantly for the present essay, Foster thus finds that the art of abjection goes no further than the antecedent he finds for it in surrealism. Bifurcated into the two tendencies represented by André Breton and Georges Bataille, surrealism, for him, offers two, ultimately unsuccessful attempts at the desublimation (and, presumably, transformation) of repressed experience in the symbolic order of life in capitalism: the 'broken society' in question, for Foster. Firstly, there is what he calls Breton's 'Oedipal naughtiness,' where the transgression effected by dream, desire, automatism, the marvellous encounter and so on, becomes a rebellious gesture seeking only confirmation in and by the symbolic law.³⁸ The surrealism of Breton, Desnos, Soupault, Eluard, Aragon *et al*, failed to achieve what Walter Benjamin once asked of it: 'To win the energies of intoxication for the revolution.'³⁹ Yet on the other hand, Bataille's base materialism, with its lower-than-low anti-aesthetic, deliberately offers nothing more (or less) than the love of the fetish, the delight of taboo, the deliquescence of the high to the low, the horizontal, the base and the waste.

The Form of *Informe*

It is well-known that Kelley admired Bataille: throughout Kelley's oeuvre, one can see the influence of *informe*, the formless mode Bataille advocated.⁴⁰ One might refer back to the *Poltergeist* photographs (1979), shot by David Askevold, with their images of Kelley streaming with 'ectoplasm' (literally, 'outside something formed') and texts about teenage angst, to see an early example.⁴¹ And writing in the same 1996 edition of *October* that carried Foster's critique of abject art, Rosalind Krauss decisively framed Kelley's reception in terms of Bataillean theory:



The stuffed animals of the works called *Arena* ... in which these dirty, handcrafted toys sit on crocheted blankets like so many soiled underbellies of elite culture - or to use the German word for turd, the *lumpf*-like objects that appear in some of Kelley's drawings - owe their capacity for subversion in Bataille's sense, which is to say the operation of transgression from beneath, to their very indeterminacy.⁴²

While Krauss's comments are persuasive, it is worth noting what Kelley said about his *Free Gesture Frozen Yet Refusing to Submit to Personification* painting series (1998):

I've used these goopy kinds of forms so many times now, however, that I can no longer see them as non-compositional. A while back I used them as some kind of play with the abject - the unformed. Now I just see them as complex forms.⁴³

Abject, 'goopy forms,' deployed by Kelley, as we know, since his undergraduate work, refer both to the legacy of action painting and to Bataille's ideas. But, as he suggests, they are complex forms: aesthetic and art-historical forms. The artist, then, appropriates and mobilises such forms not only for their 'immediate' abject effect but also as a discursive move. This seems pivotal to understanding his work, much of which, especially the soft toy installations, engages with the *discourses* of surrealism, both Bataillean and Bretonian, but in a way rather different from both Foster and Krauss's readings. Using notions of baseness and a desublimatory art of desire, repression and the unconscious, Kelley revisits the surrealist idiom to probe further the possibilities for subversion and transgression in the symbolic order. These investigations operate, however, more by way of interference than transcendence. Kelley's practice is directed more towards critique than the exposition of a new aesthetic language. As opposed to Levine's reading, where Kelley is the floating sceptic, I would suggest the artist achieves a more clearly politicised stance.

One can see this in his admiration for Magritte and Dalí, for example, which derives from their reanimation of the imagery of bourgeois art:

Their style was antithetical to that of other surrealist painters like André Masson or Joan Miró, whose paintings ... could be said to operate expressively in an attempt to transcend language and the sign ... What was to the modernists a despicable world of conventional, academic imagery became an open field of taboos and dead signs that could be rearranged at will.⁴⁴

Perhaps Kelley is mistaken to imagine that surrealist attempts to go beyond referential language and signification were so different from his own. Louis Aragon said of early surrealism that, 'We were busy marrying sounds to each other in order to rebuild things, endlessly proceeding to metamorphoses, calling forth strange animals.'⁴⁵ Aragon's play with linguistic permutations, creating new connections and ideas, reminds us of Lautréamont's famous encounter between the umbrella and sewing machine. Such games prefigured the semiotic reading of surrealism suggested by Kelley and scholars such as Rosalind Krauss, Jane Livingstone and Dawn Ades.⁴⁶ Whether the signs Kelley himself uses are alive or dead will be an issue here. His toy work, to which I will return presently, addresses the possibility of symbolic disruption by dealing with ideas of *economy* that deploy affect in a political way. As gifts, as tokens, as signifiers in the wider *langue* of social relations, toy objects will become more than themselves. They will become the animated register of a repressed real.



School Daze

Of course, Foster is right to say that Kelley plays with representations of trauma. The artist's architectural scale model project *Education Complex* (1995), for example, recreates all the buildings in which he was educated, but leaves about eighty percent of the labyrinthine and rather beautiful structure blank or generically filled-in to account for the traumas that occurred in those sites and which caused the architect to repress their memories.⁴⁷ This might well sound like victim culture, but the work in fact exists in part as satirical comment on the 80s and 90s media sensation that became known as false memory syndrome; in *Educational Complex*, Kelley is as much social diagnostician as pathological subject, commenting drily on the new ubiquity of the psychological trope. Much as Hopkins suggests above with regard to Kelley's criticism of 'healthy' child-rearing, this is a satire or caricature of the popular institutionalisation of a psychoanalytic discourse. Contra Foster's notion of a *lingua trauma* sustaining Kelley's practice, the artist mocks the latter's colonisation of popular culture. But as it coolly tracks the artist's intra-institutional art career for blots, for 'trauma,' exteriorising, concretising and socialising that phenomenon, *Complex* poses the education system as repressive ideological apparatus - a vital component of that 'social construction of reality' mentioned above.

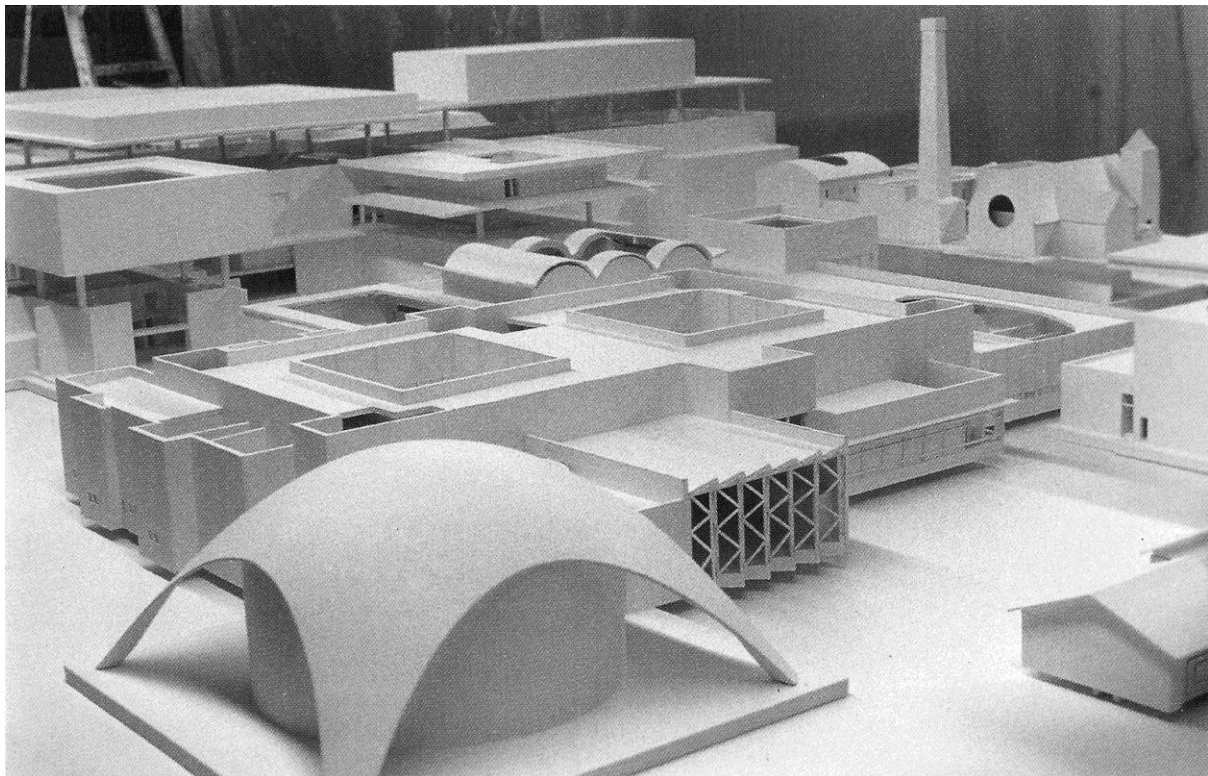


Fig. 2: Mike Kelley, *Educational Complex*, 1995, Acrylic, latex, foamcore, fiberglass, wood, 51 x 192 x 96 inches.

On another level, as Anthony Vidler notes, the work quite seriously problematises the very structure and mode of exposition of personal and historical memory, translating them from psychic and narrative models to something quasi-architectural. He draws on Freud's notion of the screen



memory, where an affective memory is displaced by another one, to question the degree to which 'presentism' displaces our capacity for objective recollection. *Educational Complex*, Vidler writes, is an 'interrogation of space as a primary vehicle for tracing [memory's] repression and recovery.'⁴⁸ The *Complex* structure blurs the distinction between architecture, sculpture and text; between intimate and public knowledge; and it questions *where* memory and experience are lodged.

Arguably, a work like *Educational Complex* shares strong affinities with the surrealist encounter between the subject and quotidian life; in its investigation of the relation between the interior space of memory, self-relation, and the exterior environment, *Complex* resembles a more sober version of Louis Aragon's *Paris Peasant* (1926), with its 'modern mythology' and suggestions of revelatory encounter. Aragon's flaneurial eye makes an account of Parisian rooms, streets, arcades and parks, always aware that much remains hidden and marvellous both to himself and the denizens the city interpellates:

Men pass their lives in the midst of magic precipices without even opening their eyes ... It is enough to make one shudder to see a bourgeois family taking its morning coffee without ever noticing the unknowable that shows through the tablecloth's red and white chequered pattern.⁴⁹

This scene, relayed with a 'shudder,' evokes Vidler's account of the bourgeois uncanny: a class 'not quite at home in its own house,' opened to its own contingency.⁵⁰ For the agonised witness to whom the sensation occurs here, not the uncomprehending family, the cheery rectilinear grid of the tablecloth - the exoskeleton of the bourgeois self-image - shows through to something precipitous, vertiginous. One is reminded of the collages of Max Ernst, like those in *Une Semaine de Bonté* (1934), where Victorian interiors, the houses of the fathers, are mysteriously invaded by mythical beasts, waterfalls, snakes.

While it may appear homogeneous - *Complex* is blandly white throughout, like a bone - Kelley's presentation of a life projected back to itself through an experience of buildings, where screen memories fill in the gaps, is not so different from the comic phantasmagoria of Ernst, or the hallucinatory submarine world of Aragon. Indeed, it might be said that the whole of *Complex* is a white screen onto which a film, part-fact, mostly fiction, is playing, as Kelley's failing, perhaps repressed memories are supplemented and conditioned by other material. But my film-screen metaphor is a poor one: this work of recovery, displacement and imagination occurs as the movement and contour of space and form, hence its colourlessness. *Complex* obeys the rules of sculpture as well as being a maquette and a kind of text; its seamless modelling extrudes a strange, hybrid, but utterly naturalised object. And what draws it into the realm of the surreal is the solubility it shows us of physical, textual and psychic realities. Ernst's collages, which are expertly put together, and Aragon's mythicised prose, also benefit from this sense of completion, 'an ambivalent ontological reality, renouncing mimesis; constructed as a simulacrum ...,' as Elza Adamowicz writes of Magritte.⁵¹



Guilt Edge



Fig. 3: *More Love Hours than Can Ever Be Repaid*, 1987, Mixed media, 96 x 127 x 5 in, and *The Wages of Sin*, 1987, Mixed media, 52 x 23 x 23 inches, Installation view Rosamund Felsen Gallery, Los Angeles, Photo by Douglas M. Parker.

In an interview with the sculptor John Miller, Kelley explains the initial impetus for making *Love Hours*:

The first piece I did with stuffed animals, for example, wasn't even about stuffed animals but was about gifts. That was because the primary discussion in the art world at that time had to do with commodification. There were these Utopian ideas being bandied about, 'Well, we can make an art object that can't be commodified.' What's that? That's a gift. If I give you this art-thing, it's going to escape the evils of capitalism.⁵²

Obviously Kelley does not imagine his work to exist outside the circuits of speculation, prestige, and capital exchange associated with the art-world. But neither does he wish to foreground or exploit the commodified aspect of the art object either, making that issue the centre of his work, visually or conceptually. Welchman describes Kelley's doll works as 'clenched in a retort to the *noli me tangere* seduction of the mass-produced commodity and the metropolitan vitrine.'⁵³ Kelley himself distances his work from the commodity aesthetics of appropriation art and neo-Pop because 'there is [in it] some investment in mass culture on the level of desire. I'm of another generation. I have a more critical relationship to mass culture.'⁵⁴ His choice of materials - the exceptionally demoted, 'invisible' cottage labour of anonymous people producing hackneyed and ultimately generic gifts for their



children - is thus a turn away from consumer culture and towards popular *producer* culture. *More Love Hours Than Can Ever Be Repaid*, the first gift work, is not, then, especially interested in *taste*, even if it does have an interest in desire. The work unearths and brings into the gallery strange, kitsch, familiar little totems from everyday American life; a slightly downbeat, more materialist version of the surrealist *trouvaille*, shorn of the magical connection the latter makes with the artist, but selected by Kelley for cultural-political reasons no less magical, in their way.

It is worth citing at length what Kelley says of these objects:

They speak the language of the wage earner in which there is a one-to-one relationship between time spent and worth. The equation is not between time and money, it is a more obscure relationship drawn between time and commitment, one that results in a kind of emotional usury. The gift operates within an economy of guilt; an endless feeling of indebtedness attends it because of its mysterious worth. And the highly loaded nature of these objects is intensified by their material nature: by the seeming contradiction that their emotional weight far exceeds the weight of the cheap and lowly materials from which they are constructed.⁵⁵

Everything in *Love Hours* seems to allude to the mysteries of affective economy and how value is derived, exemplified in the heuristic disparity between the emotional significance and material cost of the 'raw' materials. The same point could be made of the assemblages in the *Arena* series even more emphatically since the olfactory evidence of dirt in them plainly signals valuelessness to its audience. One might speculate that *Love Hours* dolls represent non-commodified labour, driven directly by 'commitment.' But in another essay, Kelley clarifies the gold standard here: cognate with 'guilt' (gilt?), 'What must be given in repayment is "love" itself,' Kelley writes. 'Love, however, has no fixed worth, so the rate of exchange can never be set. Thus, the child is put in the position of being a perpetually indentured servant.'⁵⁶ Expressing a supposedly ineffable economy of feeling in classically capitalist terms, *Love Hours* thus presents intergenerational relationships in terms parallel to quasi-slavery, or even developing-world debt. The rhyme with such inherently violent and totalised economies is significant here since it suggests these relations of indebtedness as the fulcrum of all social and cultural formations springing from them. Later we will see how Marcel Mauss imagined a society of gift to order social life totally.⁵⁷

Interestingly, Winnicott includes something as absolute as Kelley in the remarkable description of the transitional object from *Playing and Reality*; for the psychologist, the intermediate area the object defines is: 'between the thumb and the teddy bear, between the oral erotism [sic] and the true object-relationship, between primary creative activity and projection of what has already been introjected, between *primary unawareness of indebtedness and the acknowledgement of indebtedness* [my italics].'⁵⁸ Again, the equation made here, if unwittingly, is a primary 'emotional usury' that renders love like a relationship of economic exchange, and perhaps vice versa. In the very first stages of representative thought, Winnicott seems to suggest, a balance-book is opened up; already there is interest to pay.

Usury, or interest-bearing capital is, as Karl Marx points out, capital's 'most superficial and fetishised form,' one that always summons dubious familial relationships.⁵⁹ It is capital at its most illusory and lifelike: a double of life. In the first volume of *Capital*, Marx cites Aristotle in the latter's



condemnation of usurer's interest: 'For the offspring [interest] resembles the parent. But interest is money, so that of all modes of making a living, this is the most contrary to Nature.'⁶⁰ Later, in *Capital III*, Marx describes the seeming self-reproduction of 'money's body' through the interest relation as being 'by love possessed' (a reference to Goethe's *Faust*).⁶¹ With usury, that is, money seems actually alive and generative: it's the contradictory acme of the commodity fetish where the latter's most abstract form is realized as full, tangible concretion. Metaphorically, it's the abusive parent who would possess the child absolutely, a familiar topic for Kelley.

All this seems to add up to a clear attempt on Kelley's part to desubliminate, using the *realia* of the everyday, some of the invisible forces structuring feeling in the life of capitalism. The handmade toy behaves much like the surrealist *poupée*, but unlike the dolls of, say, Hans Bellmer (or even the mannequins of André Masson), it does not register social violence or social conflict in a physical drama of dismemberment or collaged recomposition, as Foster argues in *Compulsive Beauty*.⁶² Rather, in its very inertness and blob-like impermeability, the doll alludes to the notion of the abstract *unit*: its role as counter, gift or currency-token articulating wider relationships within which an implicit violence occurs. But because these relationships are between subjects of capitalism, between whom, as Marx famously says, 'the definite social relation ... assumes ... the fantastic form of a relation between things,' the doll, like money, seems alive.⁶³ Discarded objects from thrift stores, these dolls have only nugatory financial value; they are tokens of love. An odd doubling occurs also, as the 'coin' mimes the qualities of its users. In the catalogue he wrote for the exhibition *The Uncanny*, a major show curated for the *Sonsbeek 93* sculpture exhibition in Arnhem, Holland in 1993, Kelley alerts us to a longstanding tradition of such things. Including an *ushabti*, or small Egyptian statue in the exhibition, he notes its purpose as a double, 'a shadow of yourself bound to perpetual slavery. All popular sculpture ... has this plebeian quality.'⁶⁴

Man and Mauss

This kind of double-flow of love and guilt, or the tendency of love and guilt and memories of discipline to accrete within these objects, can be understood more clearly by reference to Mauss's *The Gift* (1925). In this influential study, Mauss provides anthropological evidence that societies - from Polynesia, Micronesia and Northwestern America - are *primarily* organised around gift-giving rituals that possibly precede barter and certainly precede individualised monetary exchange. For pre-industrial society, everything - people, goods, rituals - 'passes to and fro as if there were a constant exchange of a spiritual matter, including things and men, between clans and individuals, distributed between social ranks, the sexes, and the generations.'⁶⁵ Gifts must be returned and in greater quantity, Mauss tells us, and so they order society by creating ever-renewed relationships of obligation.

Famously, Mauss provides some Maori testimony regarding the *hau* of the gift, which means the gift's identity as spirit. A gift received is part of the giver's 'soul' so that even if it is passed on to another party, any remuneration or love that comes back from the latter is part of the *hau* and must be returned again to the original donor. In other words 'the thing given is not inactive' but part of a



complex, multi-layered system of moral and spiritual exchange.⁶⁶ While this part of Mauss's text is hotly contested, perhaps it is enough to note that gift-giving societies configure social relationships on a non-individualised basis, and that the animism of the gift - its *hau* - binds groups together. David Graeber explains it thus:

In every case, the most valuable objects in gift economies are valued primarily because they embody some human quality, whether this be the creative potential of human action, or fertility, or the like, or particular histories and identities that have already been achieved.⁶⁷

I will return to the matter of the *hau* shortly. It is worth noting briefly that one of the people influenced by Mauss's study was Georges Bataille, particularly in his text *Le part maudit* (*The Accursed Share*) (1949). Here, Bataille crystallised much of his thought on the 'value' of waste, expenditure without return, or the sumptuary economy 'without reserve' that seemed indicated by the *potlatch* about which Mauss wrote, where gifts took the form of the destruction of goods, valuables and reserves. But where Bataille focuses on the exorbitance of gift-giving and wild expenditure as the laudably destructive opposite of bourgeois parsimony, for Mauss, even the *potlatch* is 'essentially usurious'.⁶⁸ Despite the utopian content of *The Gift* - the possibility the text holds out for a society organised entirely outside capitalist principles - relationships of obligation and indebtedness are the essence of social ties. Like the love hours that can never be repaid, gifts bind the participants powerfully together. Indeed, the gifts in Kelley's work grade easily back from non-capitalist gifts to the fetishised objects of capitalist exchange.

It is the animism of the gift that allows us to read Kelley alongside Mauss (the connection via Bataille notwithstanding) most usefully. Like the familiar of the plebeian statue, the doll uncannily incorporates the wider relationships it articulates. The superposition of adult and child behaviour that we saw in the *Arena* work is visible in the doll as gift, for example. And Kelley tells us that the 'stuffed animal is a pseudo-child, a cutified, sexless being that represents the adult's perfect model of a child - a neutered pet,' which also catches some of that animistic quality and makes clear the power relationships in the objects. We know, however, from *Nostalgic Depiction* that this process goes both ways, and that the doll can be a cue for regression too.⁶⁹ Most pertinently, though, Kelley borrows from the utopianism of Mauss the sense that gifts spiritually embody the community; each with a face, each a token of love. He does so not to recover anything of the organic, pre-industrial mode of social life, but to demonstrate what it feels like to live within the regimen of the commodity fetish. The uncanny life of the commodity, naturalised in capitalist society, is denatured in *More Love Hours* really by taking it 'at its word.' By showing non-living things as living, by showing us the impossible face of the gift economy, he reminds us that we always take non-living things to be living; we always imagine objects to be subjects. That is the odd magic of the capitalist everyday: it looks and feels like a folk economy. And perhaps that is why the corn sheaves surmount the canvas. The quotation marks they form there suggest that we behave 'as if' there were such a thing as a gift.



Coda: *Lumpfenprole*

Bearing these ideas in mind, we might recall Krauss's comments on the prevalence of the *lumpf* motif in Kelley's drawing work, and the *lumpf*-like qualities of the sock-monkey objects Kelley creates. In those works such as *Arena #7*, where the toys are hidden underneath the afghan, the work *Lumpfenprole* (1991), in which a very large afghan secretes a number of large bulges, or, in even more lumpen fashion, the 'hanging sculptures' (1991) mentioned at the beginning here, which bundle and weigh large globs of faceless plush toys, something covert, or really pathetic is happening. The connotations are of the excremental, the heterological, as Krauss points out: more dissident surrealism. Yet in addition to those meanings, could it be that these shapeless blobs share something with the dolls attached to the *Love Hours* afghan? Perhaps the works of *Arena* and the other projects still retain elements of the gift economy. If so, could these accumulations be imagined as hoards? Jacques Derrida, in *Spectres of Marx*, shows how hoarding, for Marx, was like burying a body; by hiding the material corpus, one is free to idealise and fetishise 'pure exchange value,' as the hoarder or miser must do.⁷⁰ Reduced to a mere lump, something hidden and repressed, oddly the doll can be experienced at its most animated. It is once again the *poupée* upon which desire can play.

Craft Morphology Flow Chart, however, catches the other side of this. Part of the point of using stuffed toys is their capacity for 'projection.'



Fig. 4: Mike Kelley, *Craft Morphology Flow Chart*, 1991, Mixed media installation, Dimensions variable, Installation view, Carnegie Museum of Art, Pittsburgh, 1991. Photo: Eric Baum



In his essay 'In the Image of Man,' Kelley suggests that there is an ineluctable desire to project a 'Platonic' human onto crude doubling images, hence *Craft Morphology* attempts to strip back possibilities for such investment:

First, the crafts are arranged categorically, according to construction technique and shape, on simple folding tables. Second, every one of these items, accompanied by a ruler to show its true size, has been photographed. And third, one representative grouping of craft items - the collection of 'sock monkeys' - has been rendered in a large black-and-white drawing reminiscent of archaeological illustration. Through this reiteration, I propose that the psychological baggage that usually attends such objects has been discarded. Of course, by attempting to repress them, these emotional qualities become even more pervasive.⁷¹

Kelley may wish to stress the persistence of sentiment, a fetishised and abstracted idea of the 'human.' But perversely, although it is facilitated by that notional figure, I suggest that it is exactly the *thinginess* of these craftworks that evokes the viewer's empathy, their complex admixture of pathos and bathos. As much as these works allow us to experience as a kind of oscillation our commodified selves, or our subjecthood as thinghood, there is a small redemptive content here. It appears not in the satisfaction, love, work, or beauty of the objects but their simple ability to generate another kind of materiality, the recognition of a kind of base materialism or corporeality upon which the superstructures of capitalist sentiments are erected, an uncanny flashback to the self as thing. Hence the experience of the artwork allows both a mastering, aestheticised view many times underwritten through the regimes of categorization and cognition the work sets up, and also this other apprehension of the self as the object of scrutiny, of the gaze, a sensation Kelley associates elsewhere with a version of the death-drive, or the *desire* to return to thinghood.⁷² That surrealist desire to precipitate from the germinal plasma of the unconscious some new beast finds its fullest expression in this rediscovery of thinghood: the kernel of trauma that punctures a rationalised quotidian. Such an apprehension of the persistent physicality not just of the self, but the mind, offers a more general resistance to that subsumption by everyday culture of which Marcuse warns, and correspondingly generates within that field the possibility of critique. As Theodor Adorno puts it in *Negative Dialectics*, 'the mind's ... reminder of its physical aspect ... is the only source of whatever hope the mind can have.'⁷³

¹ Thomas Kellein (ed.), *Mike Kelley*, Edition Cantz, Basel/ Frankfurt, London 1992, 26.

² See Rosalind Krauss and Yves-Alain Bois, *Formless: A User's Guide*, Zone, New York, 1997, 78.

³ Cary Levine, *Pay for Your Pleasures: Mike Kelley, Paul Kelley, Raymond Pettibon*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 2013, 4.

⁴ Interview from *Artforum*, May 2012. Accessed via: http://www.tonyoursler.com/individual_text.php?navItem=text&textId=53&dateStr=May.%201,%202012&subSection=By%20Tony%20&title=Mike%20Kelley



⁵ Mike Kelley, 'Missing Time: Works On Paper 1974-1976, Reconsidered,' in *Minor Histories: Statements, Conversations, Proposals*, ed. John C. Welchman, MIT, Cambridge. Mass. 2004, 65.

⁶ See Mike Kelley, 'Foul Perfection: Some Thoughts on Caricature,' in *Foul Perfection: Essays and Criticism*, ed. John C. Welchman, MIT, Cambridge, Mass, 2003, 20-38.

⁷ Mike Kelley and Jim Shaw, 'Jim Shaw: Here Comes Everybody,' in Mike Kelley, *Interviews, Conversations, and Chit-Chat (1986 - 2004)*, ed. John C. Welchman, JRP Ringier and Les Presses du réel, Zurich and Dijon, 2005, 176.

⁸ Interview with Cary Levine in 2010. See Cary Levine, *Pay for your Pleasures*, 57.

⁹ For example, 'Mike Kelley and Jim Shaw,' and 'Jim Shaw: Here Comes Everybody,' *ibid.*, 176.

¹⁰ Levine's argument borrows from Peter Sloterdijk's 1982 *Critique of Cynical Reason* and the latter's recuperation of the kynic to construct the floating ironist.

¹¹ See John Geiger, *Nothing is True, Everything is Permitted: the Life of Brion Gysin*, The Disinformation Company, New York, 2005.

¹² See Oliver Harris, *William Burroughs and the Secret of Fascination*, Southern Illinois University Press, Carbondale, 2006, for the genealogy of Burroughs' manuscripts and techniques.

¹³ Robert Storr, 'Disparities and Deformations: Our Grotesque,' in *Disparities and Deformations: Our Grotesque*, ed. Sarah S. King, SITE Santa Fe, Santa Fe, 2004, 60.

¹⁴ See Jack Spector, *Surrealist Art and Writing (1919- 39): The Gold of Time*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1997, 22-42.

¹⁵ Storr, 'Disparities and Deformations,' 118.

¹⁶ Mike Kelley and Jim Shaw, 'Jim Shaw: Here Comes Everybody,' 167.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 166.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 177.

¹⁹ Walter Benjamin, 'Surrealism: The Last Snapshot of the European Intelligentsia,' in *One Way Street*, trans. Edmund Jephcott and Kingsley Shorter, Verso, London, 1997, 229.

²⁰ Mike Kelley, 'Foul Perfection: Some Thoughts on Caricature,' 32.

²¹ See Martica Sawin, *Surrealism in Exile and the Beginning of the New York School*, MIT Press, Cambridge, 1995, for the standard account of this set of transactions. On the topic of the 'butchness' of the toy work, with its attention to feminised labour, see Levine, *Pay For Your Pleasures*, op cit., 59-61, or Levine, *Mike Kelley: Arenas*, 9-10 for a discussion of how some feminist artists and critics have objected on somewhat essentialist grounds to Kelley's appropriation of a traditionally feminised craft.

²² John C. Welchman, 'The Mike Kelleys,' in John C. Welchman, Isabelle Graw, Anthony Vidler, *Mike Kelley*, Phaidon, London, 1999, 67.

²³ See André Breton's *Mad Love* for his famous account of finding the unusual mask in the flea market that would complete Giacometti's *Invisible Object* sculpture. André Breton, *Mad Love*, trans. Mary-Ann Caws, University of Nebraska Press, Lincoln and London, 1987 (1937), 32.

²⁴ John C. Welchman, 'The Mike Kelleys,' 67.



- ²⁵ See for example, Ralph Rugoff's comments on the "whiff of pederasty" around the works. Ralph Rugoff, catalogue text, *Just Pathetic*, Rosamund Felsen Gallery, Los Angeles, 1990, 5.
- ²⁶ Mike Kelley, *Minor Histories: Statements, Conversations, Proposals*, ed. John C. Welchman, MIT Press, Cambridge, Mass., 2004, 53.
- ²⁷ Mary Douglas, *Purity and Danger*, Routledge, London, 1996 (1966), 2.
- ²⁸ Mike Kelley, 'Playing With Dead Things: On the Uncanny,' *Minor Histories*, 75.
- ²⁹ D. M. Winnicott, *Playing and Reality*, Routledge, Oxford, 1991 (1971), 2.
- ³⁰ David Hopkins, *Childish Things*, The Fruitmarket Gallery, Edinburgh, 2011, 65.
- ³¹ Aurel Kolnoi, *On Disgust*, eds Barry Smith and Carolyn Korsmeyer, Chicago and MIT Press, La Salle, 2004, 60.
- ³² Cited by Cary Levine, *Mike Kelley: Arenas*, Skarstedt Gallery, New York, 2010, 8.
- ³³ Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, trans. John Cumming, Verso, London, 1995, 184.
- ³⁴ Hal Foster, 'Obscene, Abject, Traumatic,' *October* Vol. 78, (Autumn, 1996), 123. Foster's quote is from Kelley himself, from *Catholic Tastes*.
- ³⁵ *Ibid.*, 109. Foster relates this Lacanian idea to Freud's death drive.
- ³⁶ The Thanatoids reside in Thomas Pynchon's Vineland County. Thanatoid is defined as 'like death, but different.' See Thomas Pynchon, *Vineland*, Secker and Warburg, London, 1990, 170.
- ³⁷ To cite one of Slavoj Žižek's memorable catchphrases.
- ³⁸ Foster, 'Obscene, Abject, Traumatic,' 118.
- ³⁹ Walter Benjamin, 'The Last Snapshot,' 236.
- ⁴⁰ Extracts from Bataille's (anti-)foundational essay on Sade, 'The Use-value of D.A.F. de Sade' are included, for example, as the 'artist's choice' for theory in John Welchman's collection, *Mike Kelley*. See Welchman *et al*, 108-110.
- ⁴¹ See Mike Kelley and David Askevold, 'The Poltergeist,' in Mike Kelley, *Minor Histories*, 254-5.
- ⁴² Rosalind Krauss, "'Informe" without Conclusion,' *October* Vol. 78 (Autumn, 1996), 103. This reading, cited from the edition of *October* devoted to the *informe* in which Foster's work is published too - represents a kind of high water mark in the critical reception of abject art. It follows a series of big shows like *Abject Art: Repulsion and Desire in American Art* (1993) at the Whitney Museum in New York City, indebted curatorially to Julia Kristeva's 1980 essay on the abject, *Powers of Horror*.
- ⁴³ See 'Isabelle Graw in Conversation with Mike Kelley,' Welchman *et al*, 24.
- ⁴⁴ Mike Kelley, 'Playing With Dead Things,' 92.
- ⁴⁵ See Paul C. Ray, *The Surrealist Movement in England*, Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 1971, 48.
- ⁴⁶ See Rosalind Krauss, Jane Livingstone, Dawn Ades, *L'Amour Fou: Photography and Surrealism*, Abbeville, London, 2002.
- ⁴⁷ Mike Kelley, 'Playing With Dead Things,' 19.



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- ⁴⁸ See Anthony Vidler, 'Mike Kelley's Educational Complex,' 96.
- ⁴⁹ Louis Aragon, *Paris Peasant*, trans. Simon Watson Taylor, Jonathan Cape, London, 1971, 177.
- ⁵⁰ Anthony Vidler, *The Architectural Uncanny: Essays in the Modern Unhomely*, MIT Press, Cambridge, Mass, 1992, 4.
- ⁵¹ Elza Adamowicz, *Surrealist Collage in Text and Image: Dissecting the Exquisite Corpse*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1998, 61.
- ⁵² John Miller, 'Mike Kelley,' BOMB 38/Winter 1992, <http://bombsite.com/issues/38/articles/1502>
- ⁵³ John C. Welchman, 'The Mike Kelleys,' 67.
- ⁵⁴ 'Isabelle Graw in Conversation with Mike Kelley,' 24.
- ⁵⁵ Mike Kelley, 'In the Image of Man' in *Minor Histories*, 52.
- ⁵⁶ Mike Kelley, 'Three Projects: Half a Man, From My Institution to Yours, Pay for Your Pleasure,' in *Minor Histories*, 15.
- ⁵⁷ Marcel Mauss, *The Gift: The Form and Reason for Exchange in Archaic Societies*. W. D. Halls (trans.), Routledge, London, 1990, 14.
- ⁵⁸ Winnicott, *Playing and Reality*, 2.
- ⁵⁹ Karl Marx, *Capital III*, trans. David Fernbach, Penguin, London, 1981, 515.
- ⁶⁰ See Marx, *Capital Vol. 1*, trans. Ben Fowkes, Penguin, London, 1976, 267.
- ⁶¹ Marx, *Capital Vol. III*, 516.
- ⁶² See Hal Foster, *Compulsive Beauty*, MIT Press, Cambridge, MA, 1993, 125-156.
- ⁶³ Marx, *Capital I*, 165.
- ⁶⁴ Mike Kelley, 'Playing With Dead Things,' 88.
- ⁶⁵ Marcel Mauss, *The Gift: The Form and Reason for Exchange in Archaic Societies*, trans. W. D. Halls, Routledge, London, 1990, 14.
- ⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 13.
- ⁶⁷ David Graeber, *Toward an Anthropological Theory of Value*, Palgrave, London, 2001, 211
- ⁶⁸ Mauss, *The Gift*, 7.
- ⁶⁹ Mike Kelley, *Minor Histories*, 14-15.
- ⁷⁰ See Jacques Derrida, *Spectres of Marx*, trans. Peggy Kamuf, Routledge, London, 1994, 45
- ⁷¹ Mike Kelley, *Minor Histories*, 54.
- ⁷² See Mike Kelley, *Foul Perfection*, 25. This is also cognate with Foster's comments from 'Obscene, Abject, Traumatic,' cited above.
- ⁷³ Theodor Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*, trans. E. B. Ashton, Routledge and Kegan and Paul, London, 1973, 203.



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